



Pearl has recently re-categorized its four different drum lines to distinguish between shell material and finish. It now has the *GLX* (lacquered maple shells), *MLX* and *MX* (lacquered or covered maple shells), *DLX* and *DX* (lacquered birch/mahogany shells), and *EX* (covered mahogany shells). The *GLX* Series drums, tested here, are set apart from the pack by Pearl's new *Super Gripper* lugs and *Super Hoops*. The maple shells are heat-compression molded and cross-laminated.

Components of the *GLX-22D-50* are: 16x22 bass drum, 10x12 and 11x13 tom-toms, 16x16 floor tom, and 6 1/2 x 14 brass-shell snare drum.

A major Pearl innovation is the company's recently introduced *Super Gripper* lugs. These lugs are pin-hinged at their bottoms, and have no springs. The tension rod ends have small cylindrical EVA plastic nut receivers. The receiver is held inside the lug. When it comes time to change a drum-head, just a few turns on the tension rod will allow the lug to be snapped open, releasing the rod and receiver from the inside of the lug. The hoop and rods stay together after removal from the drum. Reassembly is just as quick and easy, and drumheads are still tensioned in the normal way. The main premise behind the *Super Gripper* lugs is to save time when removing or mounting heads, and I love these lugs! All the drums in this kit are fitted with the *Super Grippers*, and for all the Pearl owners out there, I have been told that the new lugs will retrofit existing Pearl shells. I highly recommend the conversion.

Except for the bass drum, all the drums

in the *GLX* kit are fitted with Pearl's new *Super Hoops*. These hoops are triple-flanged, and are a little taller than Pearl's previous pressed hoops. The *Super Hoops* are 2.3mm rolled steel. Since they are stronger than pressed hoops, the chance of bending or cracking is greatly diminished. I found that the new hoops gave a bit more mid- and low-end projection, and a clearer rimshot sound.

#### Bass Drum

The 16x22 bass drum has 20 lugs with T-handle tuning rods. The bottom two T-handles on both sides of the drum are replaced with key rods. More and more companies are realizing the benefit of this idea: easier pedal mounting and more exact tuning, since you don't have to worry about the end of a T-handle hitting the floor or fouling your pedal. The drum has wooden hoops which are lacquered to match the kit's finish. In fact, Pearl has done away with the metal hoops in favor of either wooden or phenolic hoops (depending on the type of kit).

Pearl's spurs are externally mounted and have telescoping inner legs with convertible tips. Each spur plate is notched in two places: one to lock the spur leg flush against the drum for packing, the other to position it at a preset forward playing angle. These spurs do an excellent job of keeping the drum in place.

This drum had no felt damper strip, and was fitted with a *Pinstripe* batter, and a Pearl *Black Beat* front head (a black *Ambassador* weight film with a white Pearl logo). With its two extra inches of depth,

## Pearl GL

the bass drum had a lot of power. The lack of muffling made it a bit too boomy for my tastes, but after placing some padding inside the drum, the sound tightened right up, while still retaining its volume and depth.

#### Mounting System

Pearl's tried-and-true *Vari-Set* tom-tom holder is mounted at the front of the bass drum. The two receiver holes in the base block are split with half-section indirect clamps. Each clamp has a drumkey-operated screw on one side, and a T-bolt on the other. Pearl has upgraded its tom-tom arm with the new *TH-95*. The tubular arms still use the concealed ring mechanism, along with a key-operated screw at the top for locking in the angle. However, angle adjustment range has been increased to 204°, and the down tubes have been lengthened a bit. Pearl fits stop-locks at both arm ends—one to memorize arm height, one to memorize drum distance and lateral angle. The *TH-95* arms do a superb job in holding the tom-toms. The *Vari-Set* holder has always been extremely sturdy and easy to set up, and it's even better now with the increased angle possibilities.

#### Tom-Toms

The 10x12 and 11x13 tom-toms have 12 lugs each; the 16x16 floor tom has 16 lugs (all *Super Grippers*, of course). There are no internal mufflers, and it should be mentioned that Pearl now uses plastic rod washers instead of metal (to do away with metal-on-metal contact). The floor tom has three legs, knurled at their top two-thirds, which locate into T-bolt operated brackets. The brackets pull the leg into a locked position and decrease the chance of slippage or turning. The two mounted toms are fitted with *BT-1* brackets, which, like the holder base plate, utilize split indirect clamps, allowing the *Vari-Set* arm to pass through the drum.

All the toms were fitted with *Pinstripe* batters and transparent *Ambassador* bottoms, and had a nice, solid sound, partially due to the *Super Hoops*. The shell interiors are hard-lacquered the same as the cut-sides, and it's quite possible that this helps to create a livelier response. (By the way, if

by Bob Saydowski, Jr.

# X Series Drumkit

you're in search of external muffling devices, Pearl has developed the *OM-1* external clamp damper.)

## Snare Drum

A 6 1/2X14 brass-finished, brass-shell snare drum is included with the *GLX* kit. This drum has 20 *Super Gripper* lugs, an internal muffler, and the new *S-OII* bridge-type strainer. The throw-off side of the strainer utilizes a fat block with a center-throw lever. The snares extend past the bottom head on both sides and are held on by glass-tape strips which wrap around a small cross-piece in both the throw-off and butt guards. The butt end has a tension knob to pull the snares across the head, while the throw-off's tension knob lifts and lowers the snares. At first glance, the strainer appears complicated, but actually it's not; it has single-side action and works very efficiently.

The drum came fitted with a coated *Ambassador* batter and an *Ambassador* snare side head. Like brass band instruments, this brass-shelled snare had a crisp, clear tone with hardly any annoying overtones. It had a nice articulate response all around, plus a powerful rimshot sound. I should also mention that this drum is no featherweight; it's heavier than a lot of other snare drums I've tested!

## Hardware

Pearl uses a combination of its 800 and 900 Series hardware with the *CLX* kit. The *P-800* drum pedal has a split footboard with adjustable toe stop, plus a single expansion spring stretched downward. Tension is achieved via a knurled cylinder with locking nuts. Length of stroke can be adjusted by moving the spring along a serrated, slotted side piece. Linkage is made with a synthetic strap wrapped around a wheel on the hex axle. This wheel may be located anywhere along the axle, if need be, and is set with alien screws. Beater height is secured in the wheel via a square-headed screw. Hoop clamping is done with the common wing-screw/claw plate, adjusted from underneath the footboard, and there are two sprung spurs at the pedal's base. The *P-800* seems to have been improved since the last time I saw it (*MD*: Feb. '83). Its action was markedly better, and it has retained its excellent construc-

tion and silent movement.

The *H-900* hi-hat has a split footboard with adjustable toe stop, and a tripod base. Tensioning is done by externally housed parallel springs. Adjustment is made very easily at the top of each spring housing tube. A thick nylon piece is used for linkage. Each leg on the stand has a reversible tip, which, with the turn of a drumkey, enables the use of either rubber or spike point. The *H-900* had quiet, easy action and natural feel.

Pearl's *B-800W* boom cymbal stand and *C-800W* straight cymbal stand both have double-braced tripod bases, two adjustable-height tiers, and like all of Pearl's other stands, have a black nylon bushing set into the height joints. Both stands use the concealed ring tilter for a variety of angles. The boom arm on the *B-800W* has a rubber cap on its end, and passes through a concealed gear clamp. Both stands can easily hold the largest of cymbals and remain sturdy.

The *S-900W* snare stand has a double-braced tripod base and one adjustable tier. It uses the common basket design and has Pearl's *Uni-Lock* angle adjustment. The basket is mounted on a swivel, set off from the body of the stand. This swivel mount allows a multitude of angles in all directions and is locked in by a large T-handle bolt. The stand is very versatile, and can easily hold any snare drum around.

## Cosmetics

The *CLX* kits are available in four lacquer finishes: wine red, walnut, natural maple, and black. The drumkit tested was finished in black lacquer, which is a solid high-gloss piano finish, inside and out, similar to Yamaha's *Recording Series* finish. Pearl has done a beautiful job with the finish, taking the time to make sure the shell interiors look as good as their exteriors.

Pearl has changed its logo badges again. This time, the new square badges are a little larger than before, with black lettering on a gold background. The badges give series designation, as well as having separate, stamped serial numbers.

With its design innovations, great finishes, and good, solid construction, the *GLX* kit should be a serious choice for any pro drummer. Retail price is \$2,480.00.

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